

## Encourage Safe Driving

**As the parent**, you are in the best position to help **ensure that your son or daughter drives safely** and obeys the passenger restrictions and curfew laws. **Don't just rely on the police to do it.** Here are some tips to help enforce the restrictions and to encourage safe driving.

✦ **Speed kills.** The daily newspapers and the evening news are filled with stories about young drivers who were speeding when a serious accident occurred. Review the accident statistics with your child. **Few** of the young drivers in the crashes **ever thought it could happen to them.** Make your teen driver understand, in the strongest terms possible, that speeding and other forms of reckless driving can and often do result in serious, even deadly, consequences.

✦ **Alcohol and drugs.** Most parents think their kids don't drink or use drugs. However, we repeatedly read news stories of accidents involving teen drivers in which alcohol was a factor. Where did they get it? Often it's from their own home or from a friend's home. Make sure the teen driver does not have access to alcohol in your home. And, know whom they hang around with because drug and alcohol use often results from peer pressure.

✦ **Seat belts save lives** and they save people from more serious injury. Peer pressure often discourages new young drivers from wearing a seat belt because it's not considered "cool." Have you ever seen people who have suffered serious brain injuries after being thrown from a vehicle? Tell your teen driver (repeatedly if necessary) to always wear the seat belt! Make sure **you** set a good example.

✦ **Draw up a contract** between you and your child. You agree to provide car privileges as long as your child remains a safe driver and complies with all laws and family rules. Include rewards for safe driving over a period of time and penalties or loss of privileges for violations of the motor vehicle laws or of "family rules." Find a sample contract at: [ct.gov/teendriving/parentteencontract](http://ct.gov/teendriving/parentteencontract).

## More on Alcohol and Drugs

Have a serious talk with your newly licensed teen driver about the very high crash rate for new drivers of the same age group. Consider these other points:

- ✦ Tell your child that his or her priority has to be to develop a responsible attitude as a driver and to develop the maturity and skills that can only come with experience behind the wheel.
- ✦ Disclose your awareness that some teens will use alcohol and/or drugs, **even though it is illegal**, and then drive a motor vehicle.
- ✦ State that alcohol and/or drug use by teen drivers only increases the already high risk of a crash. Cite the fatality rate.
- ✦ Explain what you expect from your child as a licensed teen driver. Also explain what your likely reaction will be if you discover he or she operated a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- ✦ Stress that using alcohol or drugs and operating a motor vehicle is not only irresponsible, it presents an extreme danger for both the driver and everyone else on that road. Also stress that being a passenger in a vehicle with others who have used alcohol or drugs is not any safer or smarter.

Whatever you say as a parent or guardian, be clear, be concise and be ready to back it up. As a parent or guardian, you can make a big difference if you try. Try!

*\* Courtesy of Massachusetts RMV*



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# TALK to Teen Drivers

Teach Accountability  
about Laws and Knowledge  
about Safety



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## About Young Drivers

### Graduated Driver Licensing

- ♦ Graduated driver licensing (GDL) systems address the high risks faced by new drivers by first granting learner's permits (supervised practice stage), followed by a provisional license that temporarily restricts unsupervised driving.
- ♦ Two commonly imposed restrictions include limits on nighttime driving and limits on the number of passengers. These restrictions are lifted as new drivers gain experience and when teenage drivers mature.
- ♦ Although requirements for advancing through GDL's three stages—learner's permit, provisional licensure, and full licensure—vary across states, GDL provides a protective environment while new drivers gain experience.

### Recent Information from Poll of Connecticut Parents of Teen Drivers Shows Support for:

- ♦ Increased supervised driving hours
- ♦ Longer passenger restriction period
- ♦ Increased penalties for multiple moving violations
- ♦ Earlier nighttime restriction

### Motor Vehicle Crashes with Teens

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. teens, accounting for 36% of all deaths in this age group. However, research suggests that the most strict and comprehensive graduated driver's licensing programs are associated with reductions of 38% and 40% in fatal and injury crashes, respectively, of 16-year-old drivers.

### Recent Connecticut Crash Data

- ♦ Crash rate per 10,000 population for 16-17 year-olds is 50% higher than the crash rate for 35-49 year-olds.
- ♦ Approximately 75% of 16-17 year-olds were judged at fault in crashes.
- ♦ When these teens are at fault, the most common reasons are following too closely and speed.
- ♦ Fatal teen crashes are more likely occur between the hours of 9 p.m. and midnight.
- ♦ Overall teen drivers (age 16-19) die in fatal motor vehicle crashes at a rate three times the rate for drivers ages 35-49.
- ♦ These overall teen drivers are also involved in fatal crashes at a rate two to three times the rate for drivers ages 35-49.

*Analysis by Preusser Research Group, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

## Connecticut's New Proposed Laws for Young Drivers

Connecticut's proposed Graduated License laws affect learner's permit holders and newly licensed 16 and 17-year-olds, as well as their parents and guardians. The proposed laws:

1. **Further restrict the passengers** who may be transported by someone driving with a learner's permit.
2. Extend passenger restrictions that currently apply for the first six months after licensure **to an entire year**, but authorize the motor vehicle commissioner to provide exceptions by regulation for single parents under age 18 transporting their children for certain purposes such as child care or medical appointments.
3. Begin the nighttime hours when 16- or 17-year-olds cannot drive except for employment, religious, school-related, or certain other purposes at **11 p.m. instead of midnight**.
4. For anyone issued a learner's permit on or after August 1, 2008, **increase from 20 to 40 hours** the amount of behind-the-wheel on-the-road training a 16- or 17-year-old must get before qualifying for licensure.
5. **Require license suspensions** for any violations of driving restrictions for 16- and 17-year-olds.
6. **Establish mandatory license suspension** requirements for 16- and 17-year-olds who are convicted of certain motor vehicle violations.
7. **Establish a 48-hour summary suspension and license seizure** for 16- and 17-year-olds who commit certain acts, and requires a parent or guardian to accompany them when they retrieve their licenses.
8. For 16- or 17-year-olds issued learner's permits on or after August 1, 2008, **require a parent or guardian to attend two hours of instruction** on teen driving laws and related issues with the child before a 16- or 17-year-old can take the license test.
9. **Require anyone in a vehicle** with a 16- or 17-year-old driver to wear a seat belt and increase the penalty for anyone in a vehicle being driven by someone under age 18 who violates the seat belt law.

*For more detailed information on these proposed laws, please visit the Governor's Task Force on Teen Safe Driving Web site at [www.ct.gov/teendriving](http://www.ct.gov/teendriving).*

**TALK to Teen Drivers**  
**T**each **A**ccountability about **L**aws  
and **K**nowledge about Safety

A Message brought to you by the Governor's Task Force on Teen Safe Driving